

The Hon. Theodore Roosevelt.

Fellow Dutchmen and Dutchwomen :

I HAVE grown to regard it as a possibly doubtful compliment when an audience is told they are well acquainted with me. I should be sorry to have you recognize me by some of the pictures appearing in the daily newspapers. Fortunately mixed with the Dutch in my blood is a strain of Irish, and by reason of the combination, I am able to support attacks with tolerable equanimity.

I have been obliged to refuse almost every request that has been extended to me to speak during the last few months for I am one of the laboring classes among whom no eight-hour law exists. But I felt I had to take the time and come up here and speak at this two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Old Dutch Reformed Church. For I have a certain ancestral connection with that church, to which for eight generations my people in this country have belonged, and a certain right to speak here in this State where I am the eighth of my name to have been born. We speak of ourselves as a young country, and so we are, if measured by the standard of age in the Old World; and

yet, in two centuries — for the whole country nearly three centuries — much can be done, and much has been done in molding the national character and in shaping the national life; and I want to speak to you to-night particularly of what the Dutch did toward shaping that composite national life which we now know by the name of American, and especially of what lessons can be learned by all Americans both from what they did, and from what they failed to do. I do not intend to speak merely in praise of them, or merely in praise of us, their heirs. Every one of us is prone to demand a good deal of sugar and honey in the addresses made to us as to what we have done, and can do, and I think it would be well for us at times, without being unduly humble or unduly cast down, to remember a little the points in which we have come short. We have a right to be genuinely proud of all that has been done in this country; but we should err if we felt thoroughly satisfied that we had done all we might do. Even in civic government there is something done. As I rode up this afternoon there was one of your streets I noticed which reminded me very much of some of our New York streets.

I think it is no abatement of our patriotism, that it shows no lack of love of our people, of pride in the things our forefathers did, and in the mighty heritage we have received from their hands, if we sometimes seriously face those features of our present life which are not what they should be. So, I do not intend to speak to-night merely as a eulogist of either the past or the present, but I do intend to point out to you a few of those features of our past life in which we can take legitimate pride, and those traits of a sturdy people, from whose loins our forefathers came, which we would like to see reproduced in Americans of to-day. The little church here in that part of the Valley of the Hudson to which has been given forever, by the magic pen of Washington Irving, the charm that is associated with the historic rivers of the Old World; that part of this valley which has its own legends, like the legends of the valleys of the Rhone and the Rhine,—the historic rivers of Europe,—that little church was founded

by a people few in numbers, occupying a limited as well as inhospitable territory, who nevertheless by their indomitable qualities raised themselves to the first rank among the nations of the world, in the century which saw the founding of this State of New York — of what was then known as New Amsterdam.

I shall not try to repeat, even in brief, the history of Holland, the history of that valiant burgher folk, who wrung their independence from the cruel strength of Spain, who kept it against the banded might of France and England. But I shall point out to you that they rose through years of peace and warfare; that they rose by qualities great in peace, no less than great in war, and because they showed the same qualities we must now show, we of this nation, if we intend to hold place among the nations of the earth. Men who by ceaseless toil in the years of peace won their land from the sea, who founded the great commercial centers of Europe in that land below the level of the German ocean; whose traders went to the northern and southern hemispheres, the eastern and western continents; who sent great admirals to fight in the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the Indian Ocean, the North Sea, and particularly in the Atlantic and in the Straits of Dover; that nation, which alone, of all others, produced admirals whose guns were once heard in London itself; the nation which alone of all the nations of Europe, through a thousand years, was able to put forth fleets with which to fight on equal terms with the mighty sea power of England — that nation did not win greatness through having citizens who were content to sit at home in slothful ease. Its citizens knew how to work in time of peace and knew how to die in time of war. There were other nations that could do one or the other; but not both. The Spaniard fought as bravely as the Dutchman, but the Spaniard scorned toil; the Spaniard looked down upon the merchant, the laborer, and the handicraftsman. The Spaniard hoped to avoid the effect of the primal curse, that we should eat our bread in the sweat of our brows, and the Spaniard failed; and the Dutchman who worked, who toiled, who did continually the little

things,—not merely the big things,—rose. But he did not rise merely through the virtues called upon to be exercised in times of peace. If Holland had been only a nation of brokers, bankers, manufacturers, and traders, it would have fallen as the Southern Netherlands fell before Alva and Parma. It was because every Holland merchant was prepared in time of need to stand with sword girded on thigh, it was because every uncouth sailorman in the land was prompt to fight when the country needed that he should fight, that Holland became great. She could not have risen by the arts of peace alone; she could not have risen by the arts of war alone; she strove mightily in peace and she strove mightily in war. She had those ordinary, commonplace virtues, for the lack of which nothing in a nation will atone, and she had also the heroic virtues, virtues, the lack of which will always prevent any race from rising to the first place. We of the younger generation have a right to say that Americans have likewise shown this virtue. I see in the audience not a few men who wear badges of the Loyal Legion and the Grand Army of the Republic, and these men carry therefore the only badges of nobility which we recognize in this Republic. The men who in time of the nation's need left the business house, the factory, the farm, and the workshop to serve, hour in and out, in summer and winter, in the armies that freed the Mississippi, and the armies before which at last Richmond fell; the men who saw the fighting throughout the dark days of the early part of the war, who saw the high tide at Gettysburg, who fought until at last the country was once more made a union indeed, until once more the flag was left without a seam—these men have lived in the heroic days of our Republic; these men have left to us, their children, a memory of great deeds, which are fairly to be compared with any deeds of ancient or modern times. We have a right to remember that and to be proud of it, and we owe it as a duty to ourselves to feel ashamed if we permit, in any way, the heritage which they with blood and sweat kept for us to be diminished in our hands—if we fail to show in time of peace the virtues which will prove us to

be the inheritors of the men whose metal rang true in the times that tried men's souls.

Now, one word about the Hollander as an immigrant. The Hollander was the raw material out of which we were afterward to make American citizens. He may serve as an object lesson to some other immigrants whom we receive at the present time. If to-night I had to address this audience exclusively in Dutch, and if you could not understand English, I would speak to but a limited field, and your weight in the community would very deservedly be almost nil. The reason why the Hollander proved such good stock out of which to make American citizens was because he became an American citizen like other Americans, because he grew to be one in speech, in aspiration, in the spirit of broad religious tolerance, with the rest of his fellow Americans. The Dutch stock in New York contributed a major-general to the Revolutionary army, and a president to the White House at Washington. If Schuyler and Van Buren had remained Dutchmen instead of Americans, if they had kept to the old-world habits and speech, the old-world ideas and ways of thought, the one would have remained a country squire and the other a country tavern keeper to the end of their days. They became Americans, becoming one in speech and thought, hope and aspirations, with the rest of their country, and so they rose to positions of the highest honor in the gift of the people.

We are a nation coming from many different race strains, a new nation growing up in this new continent; closer akin to some of the nations of the Old World than others, but somewhat different from each and all. The worst deed that any man can do here, so far as the national life is concerned, is to try to keep himself apart from his fellow Americans, and to perpetuate Old World differences, whether of race, of speech, of religion, or of religious hatred, or on the other hand to try to discriminate against his fellow Americans because they may come of a different race stock from his. We have advanced in some ways beyond what would have been possible two hundred years ago. I owe it partly to the fact that I was anxious to come to speak to

you to-night, that I shall be unable this week to be present at a farewell dinner to Archbishop Keane, formerly President of the Catholic University at Washington; it shows that we have gone forward and not backward, and that we are coming more and more to realize the American ideal of broad, religious toleration and religious liberty, that I, whose blood comes from the four Calvinistic strains which went to make up what was once called "the fighting wing of Protestantism"—that I, in whose veins runs the blood of the Hollander, the Huguenot, the Scotchman and the Irish Presbyterian, should be asked to deliver a farewell address, and be glad of the chance to deliver it, in honor of a man of a different creed from mine, but a man with whom I could strike hands, because he is a highminded, patriotic citizen, an honest and loyal American, an honor to our common country. One of the great lessons which should be taught all of us by what the Hollanders did, and by what befell them in this country, is that of broad religious toleration, and the insistence upon every man who comes here becoming honestly and unequivocally American, coupled with the readiness to hold out to him the right hand of fellowship, after he so becomes an American. We have not got room for hyphenated Americans; German-Americans; Irish-Americans; we want Americans pure and simple. To-night we are speaking of Holland, and in commemoration of the Dutch, but I notice that my predecessors on this platform have those fine Dutch names of Allen, Bacon, Hall. I regret greatly I could not have been here to hear Dr. Demarest—he is of French descent. There are in this audience men and women of many different race strains, and men and women of many different creeds. But you come here to hear me simply as one American talking to other Americans, and while I am proud of the Dutch, and proud of what they did, and feel that they contributed what was of value and worth to the country, still the thing for which I am proudest of them is that they ceased being Dutchmen and became Americans, and they would not have been worth their salt to themselves or anyone else if they had not done so.

Now there is another thing which I think we can learn with advantage. The Dutch did great things in art, less in literature, and something in the sciences; they showed intellect in many ways. But it is not for that that we especially revere them. Intellect is a great thing. A sound mind is a great thing, just as a sound body is a great thing. But more than body and more than mind is what we call character. That is what counts ultimately with the individual and with the nation. I am sure all of us here have known a great many men of large intellect, of whom we distinctly preferred to see as little as possible. Some of the men who have left the most unenviable reputations in our history were men of marked intellect; because, of course, a man who possesses intellect greatly developed without having his moral sense equally developed is a more dangerous wild beast. Sound morality and good principles count for more than intellect. One thing with which I have little sympathy is the deification of mere smartness. When men say of an unmitigated scoundrel that he is "smart," I always feel like saying: "The fact that a burglar is particularly skilful in the use of the jimmy does not make me like him any better." You see now and then I relapse into professional reminiscences. They are very much more dangerous citizens than any burglar—these individuals who are allowed to pass as respectable people, because of the fact that we tend to worship mere success. I should be glad to see a hardening of the moral fiber among us, which will make us frown upon the scoundrel who succeeds even more than the scoundrel who fails.

Another thing. When I spoke of the all importance of character, when I spoke of the need of morality, of the need of having good men, I did not mean inefficient men. There are classes much worse, but not much more contemptible, than the class of the timid. There are very nice refined people who wish well, but who wish feebly, who possess that kind of morality which seems to accompany poverty of blood, who do not do anything that is bad because they don't do anything at all. I came of a church

believing all the Old Testament virtues, and believing in the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. It would not have done for Gideon to have sat and said that the Lord ought to send a sword to fight for him. He had to do his own fighting. As I said before, I have a hearty abhorrence of a vicious man. I have not one particle of admiration for him because he is smart; I detest him the more. Yet these people are hardly more dangerous to society than our well-meaning brother who won't fight. As yet we must win by striving; we can only go upward by toil, by doing, by enduring, and by daring. If we stand apart from the work of the world, if we do not go down into the dust and heat of the arena, we shall keep our clothing unsoiled, but we shall not do anything. As yet, we are a good many ages away from the millennium. If the decent people fail to struggle, if they fail to prove their truth by their endeavor, if they do not ceaselessly and at the cost of personal inconvenience, of personal loss, do their full duty, they will go down in the contest.

We are not in an age where very much can be done by mere cloistered virtue. The virtue that cannot go out into the rough world and hold its own cannot do much by merely negatively good qualities. We must have something more. We must have positive, aggressive, good qualities. Those sturdy Hollanders of two or three centuries back, who left such a great name, were able to display the refinement of life, but its strength also. They produced great painters, they produced great merchants, but they also produced great warriors and statesmen. They produced men who were willing to fight and willing to die, and therefore their names shall be glorious forever. So with us here in America. We have won great material success. In spite of the men who preach calamity and disorder to us we are prosperous; we are on the whole an orderly people. We have built up a marvelous material prosperity. Woe to us if we build nothing else. Woe to us if we are content only with the pride of riches. Woe to us if we do not feel within us a lift to what is higher and nobler. On the program to-night there is a

quotation — one of the mottoes of Holland: "Union makes strength." We have proved in this country that we are bound to have union of the sections, that we shall have no disunion among the States. Neither must there be disunion among the classes. We must make our people feel that from the highest to the lowest, each American worthy of the name feels for all Americans, and wishes to make them rise if he rises. Exactly as from Maine to Texas and Oregon we are all one people, so that no disaster can befall one part of the community without befalling the others, so also we must feel that from the top to the bottom of the social strata our welfare is bound up with that of the others. We must strive faithfully and honestly to do our duty by ourselves and neighbors. We must not be content to try to become a nation merely of sharp, prosperous business men who prey on their fellows. We must try, without losing one particle of the business capacity absolutely necessary to carry on this country, to cultivate a broader charity, a broader fellow-feeling, broader kindness, and a sterner sense of duty. Above all we must cultivate the rugged, forceful virtues, the virtues that tell in combat; for no nation can rise save through strife or readiness for strife.

As yet we are far from the time when we can afford not to fight valiantly for what we deem right. As yet we are far from the time when we can sit at home and trust that our ends will be shaped well for us without our individual endeavor to rough-hew them ourselves. No refinement, no business capacity, no mercantile success will atone for the lack of the virile virtues.

We here, in whose veins runs the blood of the Dutch, in whose veins runs the blood of so many other race strains, should each and all of us make up our minds that we will strive for the right as it is given to us to see the right; that we shall act as Americans and nothing else; and that we shall realize that in addition to the virtues needed in time of peace, we must be ever ready to display those virtues upon which call must always be made should the time of peril again come to our common country.

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